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U.S. CHARGES 56 ALLEGED NEW BREEDS STREET GANG MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES IN CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE DRUGS AT "THE SQUARE"

11 additional defendants facing related state or federal charges

CHICAGO – Alleged New Breeds gang member **Ronald Turner** has had some seemingly unusual contacts with Chicago Police over the last several months, according to a federal criminal complaint unsealed today. On Nov. 17, 2005, undercover officers posing as “dirty cops” seized more than a dozen “jabs” (bags containing smaller capsules or bags of drugs), which contained a total of approximately 28 grams of crack cocaine, from Turner and a woman in a west side apartment at 1830 South Karlov Ave. The building is one of eight low-rise structures in a fortress-like complex known as “The Square,” where Turner allegedly coordinated around-the-clock narcotics sales for members of the Covens family. Turner attempted to make a deal with the undercover officers to return the crack in exchange for a high-powered rifle. Immediately after the officers departed with the seized crack, Turner and an undercover officer had five telephone conversations, with Turner telling the officer he would bring him an AK-47 rifle in return for the seized drugs. But when Turner went to meet the officer with a dissembled sawed-off shotgun

instead, the officer, as part of the ruse, refused to return the seized crack because Turner failed to provide him with an AK-47.

Then, on March 16, 2006, CPD officers observed Turner place a silver handgun in his car parked near 1836 South Karlov. They arrested him and seized the gun, which was loaded with five rounds of .45 ammunition. And just last month, on April 7, officers seized two kilograms of cocaine from Turner but released him to preserve their ongoing investigation.

The undercover investigation, conducted jointly by the Chicago Police and the FBI, ended today when hundreds of police and federal agents began executing 13 federal search warrants and arresting up to 67 alleged leaders, members and associates of the New Breeds street gang and individuals who supplied them with and purchased narcotics. Altogether, 56 defendants, including Turner, 25, of 3444 West 12th Pl., Chicago, and alleged leaders **Terrell Covens**, 23, of 2644 West Jackson, Chicago, his brother, **Trevel Covens**, 20, of 1840 South Karlov, Apt. 203, and their cousin, **Lavell Covens**, 21, of 1830 South Karlov, Apt. 302, were arrested or are being sought on federal charges for participating in a retail narcotics distribution conspiracy that peddled powder and crack cocaine, heroin and marijuana in “The Square.” The complex consists of eight three-story buildings containing subsidized Section 8 low-income apartments bounded by 18th and 19th streets and Keeler and Karlov avenues on the city’s west side. Two other defendants were facing separate federal charges and nine additional defendants, including four juveniles, were being arrested or sought on state charges.

By late this morning, at least 43 of the 67 defendants, including Terrell Covens, Trevel Covens and Turner, were in custody. Officers and agents today also seized more than a kilogram of heroin, two kilograms of cocaine, seven firearms, thousands of dollars in cash, a bullet-proof vest,

and four vehicles – including a 2006 Chevrolet Equinox, a 2003 Infiniti, 2002 Chevrolet Tahoe Z-71, and a 2003 Chevrolet Monte Carlo.

Before today's seizures, more than 1,000 grams of crack cocaine, 2,200 grams of powder cocaine, 250 grams of heroin, \$4,000 cash, and 20 firearms were seized or purchased during the investigation, code-named *Operation Impunity*. The probe, which began in 2004, is part of a sustained, coordinated effort by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to dismantle the leadership of Chicago's highly-organized, and violent, drug-trafficking street gangs. The investigation employed undercover police officers and FBI agents, wiretaps, cooperating witnesses including former gang members, undercover video surveillance of drug transactions, and a steady progression of searches and seizures of evidence.

The criminal complaint filed yesterday and unsealed today alleges that a faction of the New Breeds (which is a faction of the Black Gangster Disciples), operates a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week drug business, generating, on average, more than \$15,000 in narcotics sales per day. All drug sales in The Square are completed on behalf of members of the Covens family, or with their explicit permission, which is typically obtained by paying a "tax" to the family. Part of The Square is surrounded by a brick wall that controls entry to that portion of the property, making it difficult for police to maintain their presence. "Members of the drug operation in The Square obtain, possess and use firearms in order to both protect and further advance the drug operation," states a 166-page affidavit by an FBI agent. Terrell and Trevel Covens' brother, Terrence Covens, and their uncle, Tylon Covens, were both shot and killed in 2005, according to the complaint. In addition to controlling narcotics sales at The Square, Terrell Covens is president of a recording label, Projectic Groupent. Trevel Covens is an aspiring rap performer and the lead performer of The Brick Boys,

which is the name that drug dealers in The Square have given themselves because they refer to The Square as “The Bricks.”

“The New Breeds gang did not get the message from prior federal sweeps: if you engage in the street gang-controlled retail distribution of narcotics and use firearms, you expose yourself to federal prosecution that will relocate you for many years – in prison,” said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. “Today, the CPD and the FBI delivered the message again. The officers and agents put their own safety at risk to free this community from the grip of a gang,” he added.

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the charges together with Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Philip J. Cline, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department; and Richard A. Devine, Cook County State’s Attorney. Also assisting with the arrests were the U.S. Marshal Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Illinois State Police and the Du Page County Sheriff’s Department. A U.S. Justice Department Public Housing Safety Initiative grant was used to finance portions of the investigation and some of the funds will be used to supplement social services for youths in the neighborhood surrounding The Square. The investigation was conducted under the umbrella of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force. The investigation is continuing the officials said.

“The FBI and the Chicago Police Department through its Safe Street Task Force partnership are able to combine their resources, expertise, and jurisdiction into a single, focused coalition to maximize intelligence, operational effectiveness and prosecution potential,” Mr. Grant.

Superintendent Cline said: “Today’s effort is a reflection of that partnership to bring down more criminal organizations. The successful conclusion of this investigation illustrates the

unyielding determination of police and federal agents to take criminal operations out of play, choking their lifeblood off at every opportunity we get.”

According to the complaint affidavit, Terrell Covens, the current leader of the drug operation in The Square, relies on his close associates, including Turner, Trevel Covens, and Lavell Covens to run the narcotics enterprise. Suppliers provide the operation with cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Members of the operation cook the cocaine into crack cocaine, and package the crack cocaine, heroin, and marijuana for sale. The business relies on members of the conspiracy to store the prepackaged, and packaged drugs in common areas and residences in and around The Square. “Runners” distribute the packaged drugs to “shift supervisors,” who supervise the operation, the shift supervisors distribute the drugs to secondary supervisors, who distribute the drugs to “pack workers,” who work shifts selling the drugs to customers in and around The Square. Certain shift supervisors are responsible for collecting the proceeds of the drug sales, which Turner then retrieves from The Square on behalf of the operation.

All 56 defendants were charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute powder and crack cocaine, heroin and marijuana beginning no later than January 2004 to the present. Those in custody were scheduled to have their initial court appearance at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow before U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael Mason in Courtroom 2525 in U.S. District Court. A list of the defendants and their alleged roles in the conspiracy follows:

Organizers / Leaders:

Terrell Covens, also known as “Rell” and “Rello,” dob 2/20/83, of Chicago;
Ronald Turner, aka “Boo,” “Earl” and “Boo Earl,” dob 10/31/80, of Chicago;
Trevel Covens, aka “Mook” and “Mdot,” dob 8/6/85, of Chicago;
Lavell Covens, aka “Bay Bay” and “Styles,” dob 3/31/85, of Chicago;

Suppliers / Brokers:

Kelvin Jackson, aka “Cameo” and “Oski,” dob 7/6/66, of Chicago;
Randall Brewster, aka “Randy,” dob 1/2/74, of Chicago;
Kendall Brewster, aka “Ken Ken,” dob 2/6/75, of Chicago;
Marcell Brewster, dob 6/28/72, of Chicago;
Terrance Brewster, aka “Terry,” dob 8/14/70, of Chicago;
Lapriest Gary, aka “Preecy,” dob 11/25/80, of Chicago;
Wayne Brown, aka “Quack,” dob 9/28/74, of Chicago;
Kenneth Marshall, aka “Sugar Ray,” dob 10/15/78, of Chicago;
Earnest Brown, aka “D,” “Dion,” and “Denon,” dob 10/5/71, of Chicago;
Adonis House, aka “Don,” dob 3/27/81, of Chicago;
Marcus Brown, aka “Big G,” dob 7/24/82, of Chicago;
Jessica Brown, dob 10/25/77, of Chicago;
Jason Ratliff, aka “Jay,” dob 9/17/83, of East Chicago, Ind.;
Jon Ratliff, dob 1/26/81, of East Chicago, Ind.;

Shift Supervisors / Runners:

Quentin Reed, aka “Swindle,” dob 2/5/85, of Chicago;
Levell Hicks, aka “VJ,” and “Vell,” dob 1/11/83, of Chicago;
Kenyati Jordan, aka “TB”, “Tone”, and “Squire,” dob 6/11/84, of Chicago;
Kenneth Starks, aka “Shaq,” dob and address unavailable;
Johneak Johnson, aka “Pepe,” and “Pay Pay,” dob 8/4/78, of Maywood;
Almonetta Hemphill, dob 1/1/80, of Chicago;
Calvin McWright, aka “Bulo”, and “Ace,” dob 6/20/85, of Elgin;
Lamont Harris, aka “Fro Fro,” dob 6/19/85, of Chicago;
Tion Newton, aka “T-Mac”; “Mac,” and “Tim,” dob 1/19/86, of Chicago;

Workers:

Rita Hemphill, dob 9/8/63, of Chicago;
Shalonda Brown, aka “Pumpkin,” and “Big P,” dob 11/6/76, of Chicago;
Quanta Wright, aka “Rio,” and “Mario,” dob 2/29/84, of Chicago;
Elgin Curb, aka “Shiesty,” dob 4/23/86, of Chicago;
Louis Eubanks, dob 10/12/80, of Chicago;
Samuel Harris, aka “Sneed,” and “Sam,” dob 3/23/78, of Chicago;
Shaun James, aka “Brisco,” dob 6/4/81, of Chicago;
Shanta James, dob 5/26/86, of Chicago;
Frederick Young, aka “Freddie Mo,” “Fred Mo,” and “Mo,” dob 4/25/86, of Chicago;
Prentice Earl, aka “Bodie,” and “Dirty South”;
Jermaine Harris, dob 1/21/82, of Chicago;
David Harris, aka “Lil’ Dave,” dob 11/22/80, of Chicago;
Donrie Robinson, aka “Black,” dob 4/18/79, of Chicago;

Rodney Willett, aka “Pork Chop,” dob 8/4/84, of Chicago;
Kenneth Sykes, aka “Kenny Lord,” dob and address unavailable;
Herbert Robinson, aka “Pookie,” and “Herb,” dob 2/6/86, of Chicago;
Ivan White, aka “Studder,” dob 9/14/83, of Chicago;
Jacqueline Holman, aka “Jackie,” dob 8/13/69, of Chicago;
Salvatore Bass, aka “Kojack,” dob 6/17/64, of Chicago;
Lonnie Griffin, aka “Lil’ Lonnie,” dob 7/20/87, of Chicago;
Octavia Logan, aka “Rere,” dob 1/16/86, of Chicago;
Demond Robinson, aka “Mano,” dob 7/1/77, of Chicago;
Gary Covens, aka “Big Man,” dob 1/18/87, of Chicago;
Terry Covens, aka “Brain,” dob 1/3/87, of Chicago;
Willie Covens, aka “Annie,” and “Willie G,” dob 11/1/83, of Chicago;
Patrick Frazier, dob 11/27/68, of Chicago;
Alphonso Stewart, dob 9/26/74, of Chicago;

Wholesale Customers:

Jeffrey Bowen, aka “Lord,” and “Jeff,” dob 12/8/73, of Chicago; and
Oais Cobbin, dob 4/12/79, of Peru, Ind.

If convicted, each defendant faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment without parole and a maximum fine of \$4 million. Note, however, that the Court would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed.

The government is being represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Terra Brown, Maribel Fernandez-Harvath and David Weisman.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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